515 The bathhouse or
sauna, as it is called in Finnish, is heated at least every Saturday throughout the year, and in the summer, during the working period in the fields, almost every day. Going to the sauna has developed in Finland into a highly ritualistic occasion. Families with small children bathe together, or grown-up men bathe separately and women and children afterwards.

343 In addition to the bathing room the sauna usually contains a dressing chamber and a laundry room. In the bathing room itself the most prominent feature is a special kind of stove in one corner, with round stones placed above the fireplace. The remaining space is taken up by a raised dais and miscellaneous benches, stools and water barrels. When the fire is made, the stones gradually become

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343 blazing hot and remain hot long after the flames
515 have been extinguished. The preparation of the sauna is begun in the early afternoon, and it is ready for the first bathers after the evening
515 meal. At this time the men walk into the bath-house in a solemn procession, each carrying a broom made of fresh birch twigs, a towel and a clean shirt. In the sauna the bathers climb up to the dais, place their birch twigs each in a basin full of hot water, and one of the men pours water over the red-hot stones in the fire-place. The steam thus created rises up to the bathers, and after repeated pourings the temperature becomes as near to the boiling-point as human skin can endure. The effect of the heat is intensified by beating the body with birch twigs to aid circulation. After the steam-treatment the next step is to wash oneself with soap

515 and water and then plunge instantly into the lake, or, if it is frozen, to roll around in the snow. This method of bathing seems rather strenuous, but the result is a wonderful feeling of cleanness and well-being, a softening of the muscles and stimulation of the circulation. Of course, the old and weak people follow a much less rigorous procedure.

The bath is as much a form of entertainment as of cleanliness, and the preparation of the sauna for his visitor is the best way a Finn knows to show his friendliness. Some people carry the sauna enthusiasm to extremes, making a game of seeing who can stand the greatest heat and jump directly from the dais into ice-cold water, then back again, and so on. The sauna has been considered almost a

515 holy place, and even today children are warned against making too much noise while bathing. [844] In earlier times most babies were born in the sauna--a wise precaution, for the sauna is practically germ-free. Certainly the sauna has contributed much towards the traditional cleanliness of the people. It has been a valuable asset for Finnish sportsmen, and through them it has become known throughout many parts of the world. Finnish emigrants have brought the idea with them to their new homes, and in Scandinavia as well as in North America one often encounters a typical Finnish sauna.

857 526 By force of circumstance, Finnish children become familiar from a very early age with skiing, rowing and swimming, and they also have opportunities to become experts at the

262 and central Finland, is the apple tree. Cultiva-
245 tion of pear, plum and cherry trees is limited to the southeastern corner of the country, and even at best it is not very profitable.

[815] Basically the Finns are a physically strong race, and cleanliness is traditional. But the harsh climate, especially the absence of the sun during the long winter, has contributed to the prevalence of some diseases, especially tuberculosis. Epidemic diseases are not common. There has not been a single case of smallpox for two decades, typhus epidemics are rare, and since vaccination became available, diphtheria has greatly decreased. Polio, on the other hand, has been increasing. Leprosy has completely dissappeared, so that the hospital for that disease has been closed. During the time of Finland's independence much progress

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Kuopio 7;6 per cent. The cities, of course, have long been completely electrified.

Recently, more and more farmhouses have installed running water, but, characteristically, only after their barns and stall had been taken care of.

Various women's associations have made great efforts to improve the general living standards in the country. Mostly, the inadequate conditions have been caused by general disinterest rather than by actual lack of means.

Visitors have long commented on the cleanliness of the Finns, as shown in their dwellings, even the very modest ones, and in their personal hygiene. Of course there is still room for improvement, but it can at least be said that it is safe to eat and to drink anything anywhere in Finland, as far as cleanliness of the food is concerned.